

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT**  
**TOWN SELECT BOARD**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**Minutes of December 11, 2018**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair Kenneth W. Goslant, Board members Lynn Doney, Julie H. Goodrich, K. David Maxwell, and Nathaniel Miller. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Shannon Palone (Pool Director), Sally Davidson (Recreation Committee), Steve Davis, and Elroy Hill.

Chair Goslant called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

- II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Scheduled):** None.

**III. BUDGET WORK SESSION**

- a. Municipal Pool.** Pool Director Shannon Palone said the number of paying customers at the Memorial Pool increased last summer. Some new programs were put in place and additional non-resident revenue was generated when the Randolph public pool was closed for several weeks for repairs. She expects a similar situation next year when the Barre Town pool is closed for large-scale rehabilitation. Ms. Palone believes some of Barre Town's more experienced lifeguards might be coming to work here as a result. Additional pool revenue was brought in by providing swimming lessons in the afternoon, which was additional to the usual morning and evening lessons. Some special events, such as "Pirate Night," brought in additional revenue and Ms. Palone hopes to hold more such events next summer. The new Memorial Park pavilion brought a number of new people to the park and apparently some of them decided to check out the pool facilities at the same time. Manager Schulz noted the Vermont League of Cities & Town (VLCT) loss control consultant inspected the pool for safety and some trees bordering the pool were identified as possible hazards. They were subsequently removed. Other minor issues were found and quickly addressed.

Ms. Pallone said the pool vacuum needs to be replaced as it takes excessive time to warm up, thus requiring too much manpower to operate while making the pool unusable for an extended time. A new one would cost about \$3,500. Manager Schulz said the Pool's Capital Equipment Plan (CEP) budget already has \$6,000 set aside for a new pool vacuum so a new one can be purchased before the pool reopens. In addition, Ms. Palone said new chairs were purchased at discount prices last summer but more are needed. Regarding personnel, Ms. Palone said there were more than the usual number of junior lifeguards last summer but they were hard-working and talented. She believes some will take the additional training sessions in order to become certified as senior lifeguards. Manager Schulz said their hourly wage was increased by \$2.00 last summer and Ms. Palone agreed the current pay now is on par with other regional public pools. She is less worried about experienced lifeguards leaving for more money elsewhere.

Ms. Palone said the current fiscal year's pool budget is in good shape and there should be sufficient funds on hand for the mid-June 2019 pool reopening as well as the two (2) weeks of operation before the next fiscal year starts on July 1, 2019.

Chair Goslant asked if diving boards have specific lifespans. Ms. Palone said they did not as they can continue to be used as long as they pass testing. She added the new board purchased last summer should last longer since it is being stored indoors over the winter. Ms. Palone said it is the board's surface that breaks down first so perhaps the municipality should purchase a higher quality board that would remain in service ten (10) years rather than five (5). Manager Schulz suggested obtaining price estimates for more durable diving boards. Ms. Pallone said the pool now has one fairly new diving board and the other should last a few years but this cannot be confirmed until it is tested. She noted someone visiting the pool last summer asked why it didn't have a slide. She said the insurance company strongly discouraged installing one due to the risk of injury. Ms. Palone said new pool skimmers will need to be installed before the pool reopens next summer. Manager Schulz said the Select Board has budgeted in the pool's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the replacement of about five (5) skimmers per year. Ms. Palone feels this should be sufficient.

Manager Schulz said the current schedule is to paint/repair the pool in fiscal year 2023/2024 but this might need to be advanced by a year or two. The estimated cost for the project is \$70,000 and the current CIP account for this is less than half of this. Chair Goslant believes the job could be done at a much lower price. Ms. Palone agreed there might be contractors willing to do it for less. In addition, the current paint is in good condition so the project might involve repairs only. She said one pool wall near the swimming lanes is in poor shape and needs to be patched before the pool reopens. Manager Schulz will speak to Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi about the pool's condition, cost estimates for needed repairs, and a timeline for more extensive repairs. Board member Maxwell then thanked Ms. Palone for the valuable information provided tonight.

- b. Support Services.** Manager Schulz then went through the Support Services budget, which involves funding outside agencies such as Washington County, VLCT, Mountain Alliance, etc. He said the amount budgeted for legal services will remain at \$15,000. Manager Schulz said legal bills associated with the delinquent tax sale are offset by the overdue taxes collected during the process. There have been real efforts to reduce other legal expenses and Manager Schulz added sometimes our insurance company will cover the extra expenses of a prolonged lawsuit. He said the State of Vermont will cover some but not all expenses related to Green Up Day so \$900 has been budgeted for this. Manager Schulz said the expense of printing the Annual Town Report has been kept stable by reducing the number printed to just 800. This was the amount done last year and few were left over after Town Meeting Day. The cost for the professional audit will remain the same next year as the current auditors agreed to renew their services for another year at the same price. Manager Schulz checked and found this was a competitive price.

As usual, the Washington County Tax will go up two percent (2%) next year but the municipality has no control over this. The annual dues for membership in the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation (CVEDC) has remained steady at \$2,500 for several years. Manager Schulz said he has tried to utilize their services on a more regular basis over the past six (6) months.

The Conservation Commission's proposed budget is now set at \$400 but its members have requested an increase to cover extra costs related to the imminent spread into Northfield of the Emerald Ash Borer (and other concerns). The Conservation Commission also has asked to have access to the surplus money collected when donations were solicited for the purchase of the TDS property at the Paine Mountain summit. There was no objection. Manager Schulz said VLCT dues will rise about five percent (5%) in the next fiscal year but this should not be a major concern since VLCT membership provides the municipality with a number of valuable services and also gives access to lower cost insurance coverage through VLCT PACIF.

Regarding the Mountain Alliance budget, Manager Schulz said this will increase from \$7,000 to \$10,000 because of a new state rule that solid waste management districts must hold a minimum of four (4) hazardous household waste collections each year. In recent years, the Mountain Alliance has been holding three (3) with two (2) held in Randolph and the other in Northfield. The municipality had been covering all the costs of the Northfield event but now will pay that amount and about half of the cost of the fourth event. Even with this increase, Manager Schulz feels Mountain Alliance membership is a bargain as we probably would be paying twice as much had we stayed with its previous solid waste management district.

The \$3,500 budgeted for Green Mountain Transit (GMT) is to cover the expense of the weekly shuttle service that provides our residents, especially senior citizens, with access to local services. The funding request for the GMT Commuter Bus again will be a separate article on the Town Warning.

Manager Schulz said the amount budgeted for General Liability Insurance (\$9,250) should drop when the next revised budget is produced. We were informed of insurance cost savings since the initial budget was drafted. The expense for operating the streetlights will remain at \$21,000 per year due to stable and low electric rates. Board member Maxwell felt the installation of energy-efficient LED light fixtures also is a factor.

In conclusion, Manager Schulz said the Support Services budget has an overall 5.7% projected increase but he expected this to be lowered when the aforementioned drop in liability insurance expense is factored into the next version of the proposed budget.

**IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Unscheduled).** There was none.

**V. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Board member Maxwell, seconded by Board member Doney, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kenneth L. McCann*

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the regular Select Board meeting of January 8, 2019.